

Gioachino Rossini

Il Barbiere di Siviglia

CONDUCTOR
Maurizio Benini

PRODUCTION
Bartlett Sher

SET DESIGNER
Michael Yeargan

COSTUME DESIGNER
Catherine Zuber

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Christopher Akerlind

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

Opera in two acts

Libretto by Cesare Sterbini,
based on the play by Beaumarchais

Saturday, March 24, 2007, 1:30–4:40pm

New Production

This production of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* was
made possible by a generous gift from
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The Metropolitan Opera
2006-07 Season

The 560th Metropolitan Opera performance of

Gioachino Rossini

Il Barbiere di Siviglia

Conductor
Maurizio Benini

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Fiorello, Count Almaviva's servant
Brian Davis

Count Almaviva
Juan Diego Flórez

Figaro, a barber
Peter Mattei

Dr. Bartolo, Rosina's guardian
John Del Carlo

Ambrogio, Dr. Bartolo's servant
Rob Besserer

Rosina
Joyce DiDonato

Don Basilio, a music teacher
John Relyea

Berta, Dr. Bartolo's housekeeper
Claudia Waite

An officer
Mark Schowalter

Recitative Accompanist
Robert Morrison

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Saturday, March 24, 2007, 1:30–4:40pm



Juan Diego Flórez
as Count Almaviva in
Rossini's *Il Barbiere di
Siviglia*.

Chorus Master **Raymond Hughes**

Musical Preparation **Gregory Buchalter, Robert Morrison,
J. David Jackson, and Caren Levine**

Assistant Stage Directors **Robin Guarino, Gregory Keller,
and Kathleen Smith Belcher**

Met Titles **Sonya Friedman**

Italian Coach **Nico Castel**

Assistant to the Costume Designer **Michael Zecker**

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Gioachino Rossini

Il Barbiere di Siviglia

Premiere: Teatro Argentina, Rome, 1816

Rossini's perfectly honed treasure survived a famously disastrous opening night (caused by factions and local politics more than any reaction to the work itself) to become what may be the world's most popular comic opera. Its buoyant good humor and elegant melodies have delighted the diverse tastes of every generation for nearly two centuries. *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* was the first opera heard in Italian in the United States, when Manuel García, who had sung Count Almaviva in the premiere, brought his family of singers, including his daughter, diva Maria Malibran, and his son, Manuel Jr., to perform the opera in 1825 at New York City's Park Theater. Several of the opera's most recognizable melodies have entered the world's musical unconscious, most notably the introductory patter song of the swaggering Figaro, the titular barber of Seville. The opera offers superb opportunities for all the vocalists, exciting ensemble composition, and a natural flair for breezy comedy that has scarcely been equaled since.

The Creators

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868) was idolized in his day as the world's foremost opera composer. He wrote more than 30 of them, both comic and tragic, before inexplicably stopping opera composition in 1829, at the age of 37, after his success with the grand *Guillaume Tell*, best known for its overture. Though some of Rossini's tragic operas have recently begun a return to the world's stages, several of his comic operas have long been considered core repertory. *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* alone has never wavered in critical and public esteem. Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (1732–1799) was the author of the three subversive Figaro plays, of which *Le Barbier de Seville* (1775) was the first. Beaumarchais led a colorful life (he was, for instance, an active arms smuggler supporting both the American and French Revolutions). His character Figaro, the wily servant who consistently outsmarts his less-worthy masters, is semi-autobiographical, the name itself even pointing to the author: "fils" ("son of") Caron.

The Setting

Seville is both a beautiful city and something of a mythical Neverland for dramatists and opera composers. (Lord Byron, writing about the city at the time of this opera's composition, summed it up nicely: "What men call gallantry, and the gods adultery, is much more common where the climate is sultry.") The intricate, winding streets of the city's old quarters, the large gypsy and Moorish-descended population, the exotic traditions, and the mystique of the latticed "jalousie" windows have added to the city's allure. The Don Juan legend has its origins in Seville, and some of the steamiest operas (such as Bizet's *Carmen*) make their home in this most

beguiling of cities. Beaumarchais's play was revolutionary: Set "in the present day," which meant just before the French Revolution, the work unveiled the hypocrisies of powerful people and the sneaky methods that workers devise to deal with them.

The Music

The paradox of Rossini's music is that the comedy can soar only with disciplined mastery of vocal technique. The singers must be capable of long vocal lines of attention-holding beauty (as in the tenor's aria "Ecco ridente" directly after the curtain rises on Act I), as well as the rapid runs of coloratura singing (Rosina's well-known "Una voce poco fa," also in Act I). The score features solos of astounding speed in comic, tongue-twisting patter forms, especially the title role's well-known Act I show-stopper "Largo al factotum." Beyond the brilliant solos, the singers must blend well with each other in the complex ensembles that occur throughout the opera.

Il Barbiere di Siviglia at the Met

Il Barbiere di Siviglia appeared in the first month of the Met's inaugural 1883–84 season, featuring the Polish diva Marcella Sembrich, who sang Rosina 65 times. At her farewell gala in 1909, Sembrich accompanied herself on piano on a Chopin song during the "Music Lesson" scene. In 1954 New Yorker Roberta Peters, who sang the role of Rosina 54 times, was the first at the Met to ignore the tradition of interpolating other music into this scene, opting instead for Rossini's original "Contro un cor." This became standard at the Met until another notable (and very different) Rosina, Marilyn Horne, revived the old practice by singing "Tanti affetti" from Rossini's *La Donna del Lago*. *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* has been produced in a remarkable 75 seasons at the Met, and has featured the talents of such diverse stars as Cesare Valletti, Salvatore Baccaloni, Robert Merrill, Fyodor Chaliapin, Ezio Pinza, Kathleen Battle, Amelita Galli-Curci, Leo Nucci, and Lily Pons.

Synopsis

Act I

SCENE 1 Outside Dr. Bartolo's house in Seville, just before dawn

SCENE 2 Inside his house, later that morning

Intermission

Act II

SCENE 1 The music room, the same evening

SCENE 2 Later that night

Act I

Count Almaviva comes in disguise to the house of Dr. Bartolo to serenade Rosina ("Ecco ridente"). Dr. Bartolo keeps Rosina confined to the house. Almaviva pays the musicians and decides to wait until daylight in the hope of seeing her. Figaro the barber, who has access to the houses in Seville and knows the town's secrets and scandals, arrives and describes his busy life ("Largo al factotum"). The count sings another serenade to Rosina, calling himself Lindoro, a poor student. Figaro devises a plan: the count will disguise himself as a drunken soldier quartered at Dr. Bartolo's house to gain access to Rosina, whom Dr. Bartolo intends to marry. The count is excited about this plan while Figaro looks forward to a nice cash pay-off from the grateful count ("All'idea di quel metallo").

Rosina reflects on the voice that has enchanted her heart and resolves to use her considerable wiles to meet Lindoro ("Una voce poco fa"). Dr. Bartolo appears with Rosina's music master, Don Basilio, who warns him that Count Almaviva, Rosina's admirer, has been seen in Seville. Dr. Bartolo decides to marry Rosina immediately. Basilio praises slander as the most effective means of getting rid of Almaviva ("La calunnia"). Figaro overhears the plot, warns Rosina, and promises to deliver a letter from her to Lindoro ("Dunque io son"). Suspicious of Rosina, Dr. Bartolo tries to prove that she has written a letter, but she outwits him at every turn. Dr. Bartolo is angry at her defiance and warns her not to trifle with him ("A un dottor della mia sorte").

Almaviva arrives, disguised as a drunken soldier, and passes Rosina a note, which she manages to hide from Dr. Bartolo. The old man argues that he has exemption from billeting soldiers. Figaro announces that a crowd has gathered in the street, curious about all the noise coming from inside the house. The civil guard bursts in to arrest the drunken soldier. The count reveals his true identity to the captain and is instantly released. Everyone except Figaro is amazed by this turn of events, and everyone comments on the crazy events of the morning.

Act II

Dr. Bartolo suspects that the "drunken soldier" was a spy planted by Almaviva. The count returns, this time disguised as Don Alonso, a music teacher and student of Don Basilio ("Pace e gioia sia con voi"). He has come to give Rosina her music

PETER GELB, General Manager
JAMES LEVINE, Music Director

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Natalie Dessay as Lucia Photo: Lee Broonfield/Metropolitan Opera

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lesson in place of Basilio, who, he says, is ill at home. "Don Alonso" also tells Dr. Bartolo that he is staying at the same inn as Almaviva and has found the letter from Rosina. He offers to tell Rosina that it was given to him by another woman, proving that Lindoro is toying with her on Almaviva's behalf. This convinces Dr. Bartolo that "Don Alonso" is a true student of Don Basilio, and he allows him to give Rosina her music lesson ("Contro un cor").

Figaro arrives to give Dr. Bartolo his shave and manages to snatch the key that opens the balcony shutters. The shaving is about to begin when Basilio shows up looking perfectly healthy. The count, Rosina, and Figaro convince Basilio, with repeated assurances and a quick bribe, that he is sick with scarlet fever ("Buona sera, mio signore"). Basilio leaves for home, confused but richer. The shaving begins, sufficiently distracting Dr. Bartolo from hearing Almaviva plotting with Rosina to elope that night. Dr. Bartolo hears the phrase "my disguise" and furiously realizes he has been tricked again. Everyone leaves.

The maid Berta comments on the crazy household ("Il vecchiotto cerca moglie").

Basilio is summoned and told to bring a notary so Dr. Bartolo can marry Rosina that very evening. Dr. Bartolo then shows Rosina her letter to Lindoro. Heartbroken and convinced that she has been deceived, she agrees to marry Dr. Bartolo and tells him of the plan to elope with Lindoro. A storm passes. Figaro and the count climb over the wall. Rosina is furious until Almaviva reveals his true identity. Basilio arrives with the notary. Bribed with a valuable ring and threatened with a couple of bullets in the head, Basilio agrees to be a witness to the marriage of Rosina and Almaviva. Dr. Bartolo arrives with soldiers, but it is too late. Count Almaviva explains to Dr. Bartolo that it is useless to protest ("Cessa di più resistere") and Dr. Bartolo accepts that he has been beaten. Figaro, Rosina, and the count celebrate their good fortune.

From the Director

The Barber of Seville has long had a reputation as a light and comic opera, so it's easy to forget that its source material, a play penned by a very freethinking Frenchman before 1789, was one of the most important and revolutionary pieces of writing of the 18th century.

Beaumarchais created characters whose behavior and actions undermined the status quo and conventions of his time. Since great art always comes back around to teach us again, we find today, in the fabric of this amazing work, something at once delightful and fresh and wholly new. It is perhaps an overstatement to suggest we are in revolutionary times, but certainly it feels as if the basic way in which we see the world today is, at the very least, up for grabs.

Beaumarchais heard the sound of the populace, of servants and the street, and he turned it into comedy. Rossini had a miraculous ear for the light and beautiful that could reach every heart. In a time when even the Met finds itself in the process of such extraordinary change, it is a wonder—and our good fortune—to have Rossini to speak fully and boldly, to help us, perhaps, to get a whiff of the wind of change and transformation of a previous century, and help clarify what we are going through now.

Halfway into the rehearsal process, as I write this, I find myself with the happy experience of being an outsider coming to know this institution for the first time. It is truly one of the great wonders of American life. Nowhere among our many great institutions of public art and life does one find such a storehouse of tradition and talent and a capacity for creating beauty beyond the heart to hold.

Here's hoping you find something old and something new in tonight's fare. I think we can all find, like Beaumarchais, that we are currently looking back and looking forward with a measure of hope, some anxiety, and certain joy. —Bartlett Sher

From the Conductor

The very first overture I conducted in conservatory was the overture to Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri*, and the first opera that I conducted was his *Il Signor Bruschino*. For my entire career I have had a deep connection with this composer. The very essence of Rossini is that his music sparkles, and keeping that in mind, the director, Bartlett Sher, and I want to keep the opera very light and sparkling—very simple. It is an opera buffa, after all, and not drama. As is the tradition with Rossini, I will be allowing for authentic bel canto ornamentation. When I conduct *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* I approach it like it is a fresh new work, as if the nearly 200 years since its composition have not happened. I know the traditions, and they are important, but we also have to watch and listen to this opera with the eyes and ears of today.

Sher's concept for this production is very exciting. With the stage extended forward and literally wrapped around the orchestra, suddenly we are part of the show. It is almost like being on the stage. Normally in the opera house, the orchestra is between the audience and the singers; here we have the singers going beyond the orchestra and in direct contact with the public. It presents new challenges, but also brings new possibilities. —Maurizio Benini

Notes on Il Barbiere di Siviglia

One day in the late 1850s when Gioachino Rossini—who by then was a Parisian social lion, wit, and gourmet—was out marketing, he rebuked a shopkeeper for trying to sell him Genoese pasta when he had asked for Neapolitan. Later, when the crestfallen merchant discovered who his customer had been, he said: “Rossini? I don’t know him, but if he knows his music as well as he knows his macaroni, he must write some beautiful stuff.”

Rossini afterwards remarked that this was one of the greatest compliments he ever received, and there is no reason to doubt that he meant it. Today, as in his own time, he remains the epitome of the Italian comic opera composer, the foremost exponent of opera buffa at its most scintillating, exhilarating, and ageless. And *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* is without question his masterpiece, an incomparable adventure and sheer musical fun from start to finish. Rossini himself was not unaware of its distinctiveness. In his later years, he remarked: “I hope to be survived by, if nothing else, the third act of *Otello*, the second act of *William Tell*, and the whole of *The Barber of Seville*.” Rossini’s *Otello*, alas, has been effaced by Verdi’s; *William Tell* lives on as an overture, with or without the help of the Lone Ranger; only *Barber* has never worn out its welcome on the world’s operatic stages.

Rossini composed it when he was 24 years old and already regarded as a budding operatic genius, with *Tancredi*, *L’Italiana in Algeri*, and several other works to his credit. The libretto was drawn from *Le Barbier de Seville* of Beaumarchais, the French playwright whose *Mariage de Figaro* had already provided Mozart with an excellent operatic subject. Rossini, always a fast and facile worker, claimed that he composed his opera in 13 days, evoking the perhaps legendary comment from Donizetti—who was even faster—“Ah, yes, but Rossini always was a lazy fellow.”

Out of deference to Giovanni Paisiello, a 75-year-old fellow composer who had written a *Barber of Seville*, also based on Beaumarchais, some 35 years previously, Rossini decided to entitle his new work *Almaviva, or the Useless Precaution*. It was, as you might say, a useless precaution, for Paisiello’s supporters effectively sabotaged the opening of Rossini’s opera at the Argentina Theater in Rome on February 20, 1816, turning it into a fiasco, so that the young composer fled the theater in fear, he said afterwards, of assassination. By the third night, however, Rossini’s opera was a roaring success, so that Paisiello’s has rarely been heard of since. Rossini’s *Barber* quickly made its way across Europe and became the first opera ever given in Italian in New York, being presented at the Park Theater on November 29, 1825, by a visiting troupe headed by Manuel García, who had sung Almaviva at the premiere in Rome. His daughter, Maria Malibran, was Rosina.

The impact that Rossini made upon the audiences of his day had a somewhat disquieting effect upon some of his contemporaries. Beethoven, for one, did not greet the new star with unalloyed delight. When the two met in 1822, Beethoven congratulated Rossini on *Barber*, but advised him, a bit condescendingly it would seem, to “never try anything but opera buffa—wanting to succeed in another style

would be to stretch your luck.” His parting words were: “Above all, make a lot of *Barbers*.”

A curious echo of this meeting, as well as an unexpected endorsement of Rossini’s virtues as a theater composer, may be found in James M. Cain’s novel *Serenade*, published in 1939. An American baritone and an Irish sea captain are discussing music aboard a freighter in the Pacific, and when the skipper argues that Beethoven’s music makes Rossini’s seem insignificant, the singer indignantly replies:

Listen, symphonies are not all of music. When you get to the overtures, Beethoven’s name is not at the top and Rossini’s is. The idea of a man that could write a thing like the *Leonora No. 3* high-hatting Rossini.... To write an overture, you’ve got to love the theater, and he didn’t.... But Rossini loved the theater, and that’s why he could write an overture. He takes you into the theater—hell, you can even feel them getting into their seats, and smell the theater smell, and see the lights go up on the curtain....

Rossini liked some of his overtures so much that he recycled them from opera to opera; thus the sparkling and beautifully scored *Barber of Seville* overture, which seems so admirably suited to setting the mood for the buffoonery that follows, had already seen service in two earlier operas called *Aureliano in Palmira* and *Elizabeth, Queen of England*. He also was not above doing some borrowing from the outside—the “Zitti, zitti, piano, piano” trio in the last scene of *Barber* bears a striking resemblance to the first aria of Simon in Haydn’s oratorio *The Seasons*, written 15 years earlier.

But *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* is so marvelously crafted, brilliantly inventive, and uproariously funny that it becomes the quintessence of Rossini, the ultimate opera buffa. Rossini once observed that he could set a laundry list to music but, far more important, he also knew how to create characters. Figaro, the mercurial barber himself, seems modeled out of music. His rippling rhythms, agile phrases, infectious melodies, acrobatic leaps, even his repetitions and reiterations, all define his personality with a clarity that pages of descriptive text could scarcely match. He hardly needs words—indeed, at times in that most dazzling of all patter songs, the “Largo al factotum,” he gives them up in favor of a string of la-la-la-las.

Similarly, Rosina’s music admirably meets the requirements both of a kittenish young woman expressing the joys of first love and a prima donna seeking to make a brilliant impression. Almaviva, with his impersonations of a drunken soldier and an unctuous music master, displays more spunk and variety than the usual romantic lead, while Dr. Bartolo is a tonal image of inane pomposity, and Don Basilio of slippery intrigue.

Yet for all of its graphic characterizations, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* is essentially an ensemble opera, with its duets, trios, and larger groupings that manage to be farcical and touching at the same time. Also very much in evidence throughout are the “Rossini crescendo,” in which the music increases dizzily in tempo and volume, and the “ensemble of perplexity,” in which the various personages in overlapping combinations insist melodiously and repeatedly that the situation is most vexing and they really don’t know what to do. Somehow, they always manage to do something—and it usually turns out for the best.

Il Barbiere di Siviglia has always been a singer's opera, with ample opportunities for vocal and comic display. The role of Rosina was written for a mezzo, but over the years sopranos, not willing to miss out on a good thing, have often undertaken it. This season's new production will open with a soprano, Diana Damrau, as Rosina, and in later performances it will be taken over by a mezzo-soprano, Joyce DiDonato.

Il Barbiere di Siviglia was given during the Metropolitan's first season in 1883 (with Marcella Sembrich as Rosina) and has had more than 500 performances since, with a veritable roster of stars appearing in it. Each of these singers in his or her way has brought fresh attestation to Giuseppe Verdi's verdict: "I can't help thinking that for abundance of real musical ideas, for comic verve, and for truthful declamation, *The Barber of Seville* is the finest opera buffa in existence."

—Herbert Kupferberg

The Cast & Creative Team



Maurizio Benini
CONDUCTOR

BIRTHPLACE Faenza, Italy

THIS SEASON *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Faust* at the Met and *Don Carlo* with Barcelona's Liceu.

PREVIOUS MET APPEARANCES *L'Elisir d'Amore* (debut, 1998), *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *Luisa Miller*, and *Don Pasquale*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Principal guest conductor of the Teatro Municipal in Santiago, Chile. Previously principal conductor of Bologna's Teatro Comunale Philharmonic and principal conductor of the Wexford Festival. Recently conducted Rossini's *Zelmira* at the Edinburgh Festival. Has conducted at leading opera houses throughout the world, including the Paris Opera, Vienna State Opera, Covent Garden, La Scala, Madrid's Teatro Real, and Lyric Opera of Chicago.



Bartlett Sher
DIRECTOR

BIRTHPLACE San Francisco, California

THIS SEASON *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for his Met debut.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Received 2006 Tony nomination for direction of *Odets's Awake and Sing!* and 2005 Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle nominations for Lucas and Guettel's *The Light in the Piazza*, both for Lincoln Center Theater. At Seattle's Intiman Theatre (where he has been artistic director since 2000) he has directed *Richard III*, *Three Sisters*, *Our Town*, and the world premieres of Lucas's *Singing Forest* and Holden's *Nickel and Dimed*. Has also directed *Cymbeline* at the Lucille Lortel Theatre in New York and for his Intiman Theatre debut; the staging became the first American Shakespeare production at the Royal Shakespeare Company, produced by Theatre for a New Audience. Was associate director at the Hartford Stage and company director at the Guthrie Theater, and made his operatic debut with *Mourning Becomes Electra* in a joint production of Seattle Opera and New York City Opera.



Michael Yeargan
SET DESIGNER

BIRTHPLACE Dallas, Texas

THIS SEASON *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Met.

PREVIOUS MET APPEARANCES Set and costume designer for *Ariadne auf Naxos* (debut, 1993), *Così fan tutte*, and *Susannah*; set designer for *Otello*, *Don Giovanni*, and the world premiere of Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS World premieres include Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* for San Francisco Opera, *Central Park* for Glimmerglass Opera and New York City Opera, Floyd's *Cold Sassy Tree* for Houston Grand Opera, and Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* for San Francisco Opera. Theater credits include *The Light in the Piazza* (for which he won the Tony and Drama Desk Awards) and *Awake and Sing!* with Lincoln Center Theater, Edward Albee's *Seascape*, and Rudnick's *Regrets Only* for Manhattan Theatre Club. Upcoming is *Die Walküre* for Washington National Opera and San Francisco Opera.



Catherine Zuber

COSTUME DESIGNER

BIRTHPLACE London, England

THIS SEASON *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for her Met debut and *The Coast of Utopia* and *South Pacific* for Lincoln Center Theater.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Productions for Lincoln Center Theater include Albee's *Seascape*, *The Light in the Piazza*, *Dinner at Eight*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Ivanov*; Broadway: *Little Women*, *Doubt*, *Frozen*, *Dracula*, *The Sound of Music*, *Triumph of Love*, *London Assurance*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *The Red Shoes*, and *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*; Off-Broadway: *Intimate Apparel*, *Engaged*, *The Beard of Avon*, and *Far Away*. Has also designed for American Ballet Theatre, Canadian Opera Company, New York City Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and Los Angeles Opera.



Christopher Akerlind

LIGHTING DESIGNER

BIRTHPLACE Hartford, Connecticut

THIS SEASON *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for his Met debut.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Designed over 500 productions at theater and opera companies around the world. Received the Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle awards for *The Light in the Piazza* at Lincoln Center Theater. Other Broadway credits include *Awake and Sing!*, *Shining City*, *Rabbit Hole*, *In My Life*, *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife*, *Seven Guitars*, *The Piano Lesson*. Other New York theater: *Mad Forest* (New York Theatre Workshop); *Belle Epoch* (LCT); *King John*, *Cymbeline*, *Don Juan*, *Pericles* (Theatre for a New Audience). Eleven seasons as resident lighting designer for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. Has also designed for opera companies in Boston, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Minnesota, Santa Fe, and Seattle, and for New York City Opera and Glimmerglass Opera.



Joyce DiDonato

MEZZO-SOPRANO

BIRTHPLACE Kansas City, Kansas

THIS SEASON Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Met, the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Madrid's Teatro Real, Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* at the San Francisco Opera, Idamante in *Idomeneo* at the Paris Opera, and Angelina in *La Cenerentola* with the Houston Grand Opera.

PREVIOUS MET APPEARANCES Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (debut, 2005) and Stéphan in *Roméo et Juliette*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Angelina at La Scala, Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito* and Queen Elizabeth in *Maria Stuarda* at the Geneva Opera, Rosina at Covent Garden and Pesaro's Rossini Festival, Dejanira in Handel's *Hercules* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and London's Barbican Centre, and the title role of Massenet's *Cendrillon* with Santa Fe Opera.



Claudia Waite

SOPRANO

BIRTHPLACE San Mateo, California

THIS SEASON Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and the First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Met, the title role of *Turandot* with Opera North, and the title role of *Aida* with Nevada Opera.

PREVIOUS MET APPEARANCES Helmwig in *Die Walküre*, Marianne in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Anna in *Nabucco*, the Falcon in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Mme. Peronskaya in *War and Peace*, Gertrude in *Hansel and Gretel*, the Overseer, and the First Lady (debut, 1998).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with New York City Opera, the title role of *Turandot* with Nevada Opera, and guest appearances with the Dallas Opera, San Francisco Opera, Opera Orchestra of New York, Lyon Opera, and New Israeli Opera.



Rob Besserer

GUEST ARTIST

BIRTHPLACE Winter Haven, Florida

THIS SEASON Ambrogio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for his Met debut.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Has worked with many modern dance companies since his debut in the 1970s, including the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company, Mark Morris Dance Group (where he originated the role of Drosselmeyer in *The Hard Nut*), and Mikhail Baryshnikov's White Oak Dance Project, of which he was a founding member. Has collaborated on six productions with director Martha Clarke, the latest, *Belle Époque*, at Lincoln Center Theater. Other theater work includes Robert Wilson's *The Civil Wars* at the Rome Opera, James Lapine's *The Winter's Tale* for NY Shakespeare Festival, and Mabou Mines's *The Red Beads*. Has created aerial choreography for many Broadway and Off-Broadway productions and received the Obie Award in 1987 for *The Hunger Artist*.



John Del Carlo

BASS-BARITONE

BIRTHPLACE San Francisco, California

THIS SEASON Dr. Bartolo in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Kothner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and Mathieu in *Andrea Chénier* at the Met.

PREVIOUS MET APPEARANCES Kothner (debut, 1993), Dr. Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Swallow in *Peter Grimes*, Don Pasquale, and company premieres of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Quince), *The Merry Widow* (Baron Zeta), Bolcom's *A View from the Bridge* (Alfieri), and Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini* (Balducci).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Numerous appearances with San Francisco Opera, including Dr. Bartolo in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, and Falstaff. National PBS telecasts of *Madama Butterfly* (Lyric Opera of Chicago), *La Gioconda* (San Francisco Opera), and *La Bohème* (Opera Company of Philadelphia). Performances at Covent Garden, Houston Grand Opera, Seattle Opera, Zurich Opera, and Belgium's Vlaamse Opera.



Juan Diego Flórez

TENOR

BIRTHPLACE Lima, Peru

THIS SEASON Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Met, Elvino in *La Sonnambula* at Deutsche Oper Berlin, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at Turin's Teatro Regio, and Tonio in *La Fille du Régiment* at the Vienna State Opera, Covent Garden, and La Scala.

PREVIOUS MET APPEARANCES Count Almaviva (debut, 2002), Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*, Lindoro in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, and Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Appears frequently at La Scala, Florence's Teatro Comunale, Genoa's Teatro Carlo Felice, Pesaro's Rossini Opera Festival, Rome's Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Naples's Teatro San Carlo, Seville's Maestranza, San Francisco Opera, Paris Opera, Paris's Châtelet, Zurich Opera, Berlin's Deutsche Oper, and Munich's Bavarian State Opera.



Peter Mattei

BARITONE

BIRTHPLACE Piteå, Sweden

THIS SEASON Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Met, the title role of *Don Giovanni* at the Paris Opera, and Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* at Stockholm's Royal Opera.

PREVIOUS MET APPEARANCES The Count in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (debut, 2002), Marcello in *La Bohème*, and Don Giovanni.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Wolfram in *Tannhäuser* at La Scala; the Count at Brussels's La Monnaie, the Salzburg Festival, and with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and San Francisco Opera; Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Glyndebourne Festival and in Stockholm; Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Gothenburg Opera; Marcello at La Monnaie; and Eugene Onegin at La Monnaie and the Aix-en-Provence Festival. With Stockholm's Royal Opera has also sung Rodrigo in *Don Carlo*, Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Lionel in Tchaikovsky's *Maid of Orleans*, and Don Giovanni.



John Relyea

BASS-BARITONE

BIRTHPLACE Toronto, Canada

THIS SEASON Colline in *La Bohème*, Giorgio Walton in *I Puritani*, the Night Watchman in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Met, the Four Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and Escamillo in *Carmen* at the Vienna State Opera, Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Munich, and Méphistophélès in *Faust* at Covent Garden. Concert engagements include appearances with the London Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and San Francisco Symphony.

PREVIOUS MET APPEARANCES Alidoro in *La Cenerentola* (debut, 2000), Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Garibaldo in *Rodelinda*, and Masetto in *Don Giovanni*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS The Four Villains with the Seattle Opera, Escamillo at Paris's Bastille Opera, and Cadmus/Somnus in *Semele*, Colline, and Raimondo at Covent Garden and with the San Francisco Opera.